

# Year 9 Term 2: New Voices

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Many of the authors you will study this term are people that, historically, may have been excluded from the literary world. This is because of their gender, race or class.

As the world recovered from two catastrophic wars (WW1 & WW2), new voices in literature began to emerge. These new writers wanted to use their own experiences of marginalisation or prejudice to produce texts which questioned the status quo and called out certain inequalities in society. Many readers of these pioneering writers were exposed to experiences and perspectives outside of the mainstream.

Why is it important that we have diverse voices in literature? First, so that we can learn about others' experiences of life that may be different to our own, and second – so that everyone can see their own experiences reflected in literature.

## To Kill A Mockingbird – Context

- **Harper Lee** - Harper Lee was born in 1926, in Monroeville, Alabama, a sleepy small town similar in many ways to Maycomb, the setting of To Kill a Mockingbird. Like Atticus Finch, Lee's father was a lawyer. Among Lee's childhood friends was the future novelist Truman Capote, from whom she drew inspiration for the character Dill. Lee began To Kill a Mockingbird in the mid-1950s. She published the novel in 1960 just before the peak of the American civil rights movement.
- **Great Depression** - October 29, 1929, the stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression, the worst economic collapse in the history of the modern industrial world. With banks failing and businesses closing, more than 15 million Americans became unemployed which resulted in widespread poverty.
- **Legacy of slavery** - Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, people were kidnapped from the continent of Africa, forced into slavery in the American colonies and exploited to work in the production of crops such as tobacco and cotton. By the mid-19th century there was a great debate over slavery that would tear the nation apart in the bloody Civil War. Though the Northern victory freed the nation's four million enslaved people, the legacy of slavery in the South continued to influence American history.
- **Jim Crow Laws** - laws that enforced racial segregation in the South. The *Supreme Court* had stated in the *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) ruling that these facilities should be '**separate but equal**'. However, this was rarely the case. African Americans often had to walk out of town to access their facilities. Local governments spent less on these facilities' upkeep compared to what they spent on facilities for white people.
- **Scottsboro Boys' Trial** - The Scottsboro Boys were nine black teenagers falsely accused of raping two white women aboard a train near Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931.
- **The Civil Rights Movement** – this movement was a struggle for social justice that took place mainly during the 1950s and 1960s. Its aims were for Black Americans to gain equal rights under the law in the United States.

## Extracts: New Voices

### Fences – August Wilson

Set in the 1950s, *Fences* explores the evolving African-American experience and examines race relations. The main character of *Fences* is Troy, a working-class patriarch. Key themes: social inequality, class, racial prejudice, masculinity, family and relationships.

### The Bell Jar – Sylvia Plath

*The Bell Jar* is the only novel written by the American writer and poet Sylvia Plath. The novel is semi-autobiographical. The protagonist's descent into mental illness parallels Plath's own experiences. Set in 1953 - Esther Greenwood is awarded a summer internship at a magazine in New York City. Esther feels alienated and disorientated and struggles to come to terms with the expectations for women in her society.

### I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings – Maya Angelou

A 1969 autobiography describing the young and early years of American writer and poet Maya Angelou. It is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma. The book covers topics common to autobiographies written by black American women in the years following the Civil Rights Movement: a celebration of black motherhood; a critique of racism; the importance of family; and the quest for independence, personal dignity, and self-definition.

### Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

*Invisible Man* addresses many of the social and intellectual issues faced by African Americans in the early twentieth century, including Black Nationalism and issues of individuality and personal identity.

## To Kill A Mockingbird – Plot and Characters

- To Kill a Mockingbird is a novel by Harper Lee. Although it was **written in 1960 it is set in the mid-1930s in the small town of Maycomb, Alabama**. It is narrated by Scout Finch, a six-year-old tomboy who lives with her lawyer father Atticus and her ten-year-old brother Jem.
- **Scout and her brother, Jem, learn the principles of racial justice and open-mindedness from their father, whose just and compassionate acts include an unpopular defense of a Black man falsely accused of a crime.**
- **Scout Finch** - The protagonist of the story. Intelligent and, by the standards of her time and place, a tomboy.
- **Atticus Finch** - Scout and Jem's father, a lawyer in Maycomb descended from an old local family. Atticus has instilled in his children his strong sense of morality and justice. He is one of the few residents of Maycomb committed to racial equality. Atticus functions as the novel's moral backbone.
- **Jem Finch** - something of a typical American boy, refusing to back down from dares and fantasising about playing football.
- **Charles Baker "Dill" Harris** - Jem and Scout's summer neighbour and friend. Dill is a diminutive, confident boy with an active imagination.
- **Calpurnia** - Calpurnia is a stern disciplinarian and the children's bridge between the white world and her own black community.

## To Kill A Mockingbird – Themes

### **Racial Injustice and Prejudice:**

This is the central theme of the novel. It links to the story through Tom Robinson, an innocent Black man accused of attacking a white woman. The prejudice in Maycomb is shown through the strict segregation of the community. This established segregation normalises the idea that Black people are second-class citizens, setting the stage for the injustice Tom Robinson faces.

### **Loss of Innocence (Coming of Age):**

The novel is told through the eyes of a young girl, Scout, who starts the book with a very innocent, simple view of the world where people are generally good. Throughout the story, especially by witnessing the unfairness of Tom Robinson's trial, Scout and her older brother, Jem, are forced to see the ugliness, hatred, and injustice that exists in their community. This experience shatters their childhood innocence and forces them to grow up and gain a more mature, complex understanding of people.

### **Courage:**

The book explores different kinds of bravery. It's not just about physical strength. Atticus Finch shows true courage by choosing to defend Tom Robinson, knowing he will face criticism and hatred from the entire town, simply because it's the right thing to do. Jem and Scout learn that real courage is fighting for your beliefs, even when you know the odds are against you.

### **The Mockingbird Symbol:**

The title itself relates to this idea: it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because they are innocent creatures that only sing beautiful music and don't harm anyone. This symbol represents innocent, harmless people who are destroyed by the evil of the world. The main "mockingbirds" in the story are Tom Robinson and Boo Radley, who is a good person feared and misunderstood by the town.

### **Empathy and Moral Education:**

This theme is mainly taught by Atticus to his children. He tells Scout that you should never judge someone until you "climb into his skin and walk around in it." This means you must try to understand someone else's perspective and feelings before criticising them. Atticus teaches his children to show compassion and integrity to everyone, even those who treat them badly, like the hateful Bob Ewell.

# Recap Sentences & Grammar

- **Past participle start (-ed)**  
*Covered* with the darkness of the forest itself, the bear seemed to carry the weight of the trees on its back.
- **Present participle start (-ing)**  
*Having* no possibility of getting back to where I came from, the way ahead seemed suddenly less daunting.
- **Prepositional Push Off**  
*Beneath* the thirty or forty feet of the trees' rise, the world seemed to have come to an end.
- **Lightning List**  
The forest gave me **silence, shade, secrets, solitude.**
- **Relentless Rhythm**  
I ran through the trees **and** over the roots **and** past the shadows **and** into the unknown.
- ❖ **Asyndetic listing:** A list without conjunctions e.g. 'old, decaying, broken, scratched'
- ❖ **Polysyndetic listing:** A list using consistent conjunctions e.g. 'old and decaying and broken and scratched'
- ❖ **Prepositions:** A preposition is a word or group of words that is used to show direction, location, time, or to introduce an object.

## IAMAFORESTER Techniques

Technique	Definition	Example
<b>Imperative verbs</b>	Verbs that give a <b>direct command</b> or instruction.	'Buy now!' 'Sign up today.'
<b>Appeal</b>	Using words like 'we', 'our', 'us' to include the reader/audience.	We all must act now!
<b>Modal verbs</b>	<b>Helper verbs</b> that show the <b>possibility, necessity, or certainty</b> of something happening.	'Must,' 'should,' 'could,' 'might,' 'will,' 'can.'
<b>Alliteration</b>	The <b>repetition of the same sound</b> at the beginning of words close to each other.	'Fierce fire flew.'
<b>Figurative language</b>	Using words or expressions that are <b>not meant to be taken literally</b> to create a clearer, more powerful image.	Includes <b>similes, metaphors, and personification.</b>
<b>Opinion</b>	A <b>personal belief or judgment</b> that isn't necessarily based on fact.	'This is the <b>best</b> movie ever made.'
<b>Rhetorical question</b>	A question asked purely to <b>make a point</b> or create a dramatic effect, not to get an actual answer.	'Can we really afford to wait?'
<b>Emotive language</b>	Words chosen specifically to <b>create a strong emotional reaction</b> in the reader (like anger, joy, or sadness).	Using words like ' <b>tragedy</b> ,' ' <b>evil</b> ,' or ' <b>delightful</b> .'
<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Numerical facts</b> or data used as evidence to make an argument seem more reliable.	'75% of users prefer this product.'
<b>Triadic structure</b>	Presenting <b>three related words or phrases</b> in a list to emphasise a point or make it memorable (often called the 'rule of three').	'Faster, cheaper, and safer.'
<b>Exaggeration</b>	Overstating something or making it seem <b>much more important or dramatic</b> than it actually is.	'I've told you a million times!'
<b>Repetition</b>	<b>Repeating a word, phrase, or idea</b> more than once for emphasis.	' <b>Never</b> give up, <b>never</b> surrender, <b>never</b> stop trying.'

# Sentences & Grammar Term 2

- **Comma Sandwich**  
*The expanse of trees, which shifted in darkness, fully surrounded me.*
- **Semi-colon Split**  
*The birds had long since disappeared; there was no open space for even the smallest of birds.*
- **Colon Clarification**  
*There was the faintest of sounds that seemed to touch the space between the trees: it was my own breathing.*
- **The Writer's Aside**  
*The familiar world – as you can imagine – was a million miles away.*

## Writing Rules      Perfect Paragraph      Key Terms

- Persuade:**
- IAMAFORESTER
  - One-sided
  - Logos, pathos, ethos

- Articles:**
- Catchy headline
  - Writing divided clearly into paragraphs, potential use of sub-headings

- Perfect Paragraph**
- Answer sentence
  - Embedded evidence
  - Inferences
  - Techniques (language, structure, form)
  - Effect of techniques
  - Reader response
  - Writer's intention
  - Context
  - Comparison

- Key Terms**
- Protagonist:** The main character or hero of the story.
  - Narrative Point of View:** The perspective the story is written in (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, limited, omniscient).
  - Setting:** The place/time when the text is set.
  - Characterisation:** How a writer builds up an idea of a character through speech, dress, actions etc.
  - Bildungsroman:** A story in which a character grows up, goes on a journey and learns new things.
  - Imagery:** When the writer creates a vivid picture in the reader's mind through their description. E.g. "*Glittering white, the blanket of snow covered everything*"
  - Personification:** Giving human features to non-human things. E.g. "*The moon watched over us*"
  - Foreshadowing:** When the writer hints at events that could happen later in the text.
  - Symbolism:** When objects or characters are used to represent bigger ideas.
  - Simile:** Comparing two things using 'like' or 'as'. E.g. "*The snake moved like a ripple on a pond*"
  - Metaphor:** Describes something by saying it **is** something else. It's not literal, but it helps create a vivid image or understanding. **DOES NOT** use "like" or "as". E.g. "*The world is a stage*"
  - Motif:** A motif is an idea or image that shows up many times throughout a story.